

Christian Community

A Program Service of the Council for Social Action of the
Congregational Christian Churches, 289 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y.
and the Commission on Christian Social Action of the
Evangelical and Reformed Church, 2969 West 25th St., Cleveland 13, Ohio

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PULPIT AND PEW IN SOCIAL ACTION

A Discussion Outline

by Ray Gibbons

How can ministers and lay members make their Christian faith more effective in their church and community? This urgent question is the subject for the discussion outlined in this issue of **CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**. Order enough extra copies to use with the group gathered to consider the question or with the social action committee planning to improve its program. Arrange an informal setting for the meeting, preferably in a home or the church parlors. Appoint one person to keep notes on the important viewpoints expressed, to record the group opinion on the answers to the questions under discussion, and to send the report to **CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**.

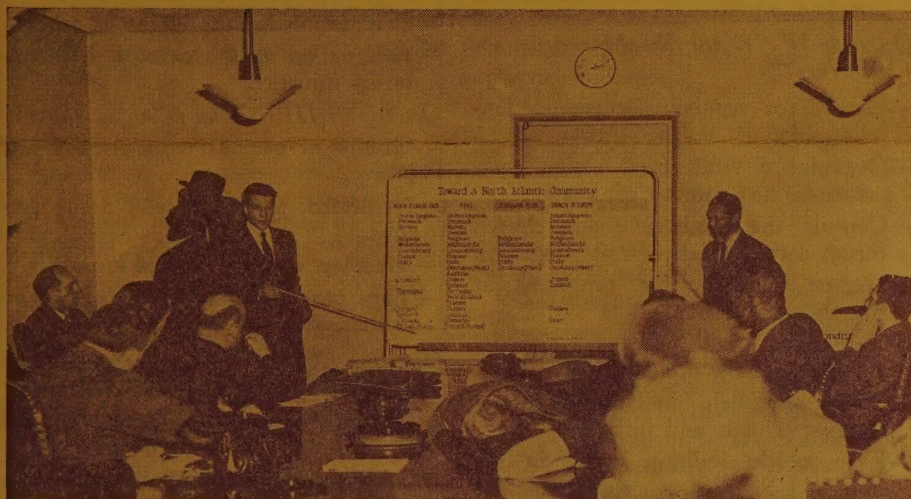


Procedure

Worship: Read Luke 10:25-37 for Jesus' answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Read Ephesians 4:25-32 and 6:10-20 for Paul's instructions to church members. Lead a session of prayer. The leader should read the Purpose as follows:

Purpose: To consider what ministers and lay members of the church can do to make their Christian faith more effective in the church and community.

Example: Mention one or two social issues which have involved the church or church members, such as the purchase of a house by a Negro family in a white residential area, or the objection to the



Chase News Photo

A high spot of the January meeting of the Commission on Christian Social Action in Washington was a one-day seminar on public affairs in which Evangelical and Reformed pastors and lay people from the surrounding area took part. The above picture shows Mr. Clifford Ketzal of the State Department's Policy Reports staff briefing the group on some of the current issues in international relations.

THE PEW PREACHES

Is Protestantism to be nothing but a ritual observance, a token gesture toward respectability? Or are we going to make it an ever-unfolding concept which irradiates the lives of all who are touched by it? Are we concerned that, if we make our group Christian in affiliation, some will stay away from the group? If that is true, is it so bad? Isn't it time that church affiliation in our Protestant churches meant more than lip-service and financial contributions?

It is not more likely that, rather than losing people, we will bring people back to the Christian fold, because we have taken Christianity out of the Sunday closet, have taken it out and made it meaningful in the everyday life of the community? Haven't we lost more good and honest people by keeping silent on the issues of the day, than we will ever lose by searching our souls for Christian answers and by publicly facing our Christian social responsibilities?

—Letter from a Lay Woman

use of books on Russian communism in the schools, or the proposal to resettle refugees in the community, or the condition of migratory or imported labor, or some other social issue. Raise questions, "How are church people involved?" "Who is my neighbor?"

After a few minutes read the first of the following questions and answers. Ask how each meets the thoughts of Jesus and Paul. Allow discussion of each and list additional answers. Indicate agreements. Seek definite decisions on which answers are right and Christian. Then proceed to the next question.

Discussion

Question I. "What is the job God wants our Church to do?"

- Stick to the personal gospel and keep away from social issues.
- Extend comfort and give aid to the victims of injustice.
- Bring various parties, classes, and races together within the Church.
- Provide leaders for the community and encourage them to act.
- Cooperate with other churches and secular organizations seeking to meet the problem.

Question II. "What topics belong in church?"

- Subjects on which there is virtual unanimity among the members.
- Subjects on which people have open minds.
- Issues which people feel are very important or upon which they feel deeply.
- Questions involving family life, drinking and personal problems.
- Questions involving work, politics, race, world affairs.
- Problems involving the health and welfare of the community.

Church members, citizens and missionaries will be greatly interested in the report of the Advisory Committee on Point Four, Nelson Rockefeller, chairman. This report will contain the recommendations for renewal and enlargement of the program. If not available in time for mailing with this issue of CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, write to your national social action office for a copy.

Question III. "What should we do individually?"

- Help in community organizations which are working at the problem.
- Work in political parties to remedy the situation.
- Talk with persons of influence.
- Write for materials and read up on the problem.
- Give money to church and other organizations working at the problem.
- Organize a group to study the problems and carry on a program of education and action.

Question IV. "What should we do together?"

- Gather for regular discussion-action-fellowship.
- Organize a vital social action committee in the church.
- Consult the minister about church forum series, speakers and programs.
- Suggest speakers for programs at church organizations.
- Help raise funds for church agencies dealing with the problem.
- Select and help individuals attend training schools and institutes.
- Keep a live bulletin board in the church. Supply a good literature table.
- Cooperate with other community organizations working on the problem.
- Keep the congregation informed through the calendar or special news sheet.
- Support the minister in his efforts to deal with the problem.

Question V. "What can the pastor do?"

- Help organize a committee or group for social action.
- Take stands and let them be known in the community.
- Join with other ministers or laymen in public statements.
- Lead in worship which has a strong social content.
- Secure advisors and consultants on the problem.
- Call church meetings and arrange church programs.
- Help form community opinion through talks, speeches and articles.

Question VI. "What do we mean by freedom of the pulpit?"

- Freedom to express general principles.
- Freedom to deal with specific, controversial issues.
- Freedom to express opinions prevalent in the congregation.

—Freedom to oppose personal sins and vices.

—Freedom to plead for reconciliation of differences, toleration.

—Freedom to preach as conscience leads.

Question VII. "To what motives should Christians appeal?"

—Desire for security.

—Self-interest.

—Group recognition.

—Creative self-expression.

—Devotion to God and His Kingdom.

—Fear of Public Opinion.

—Compassion for the plight of others.

—Indignation on the part of those suffering injustice.

Question VIII. "Who is my neighbor?"

—Groups of persons with prestige and power.

—Neglected, oppressed, and needy persons.

—Members of our kith and kin.

—The other members of our own church.

Question IX. "What resources are available?"

—Competence which can be acquired for dealing with the problem.

—Prestige belonging to certain persons or the whole group.

—Outstanding authorities who can be cited for support.

—Appeals to reason and the sense of justice.

—Appeals to religious convictions.

—General agreement upon what ought to be done, either expressed or implied.

Conclusion

Summarize the discussion by restating the purpose and reviewing the expressions of judgment on each of the questions. Announce the plans for follow-up and future meetings. Remind the secretary to send the report to CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. Thank the members of the group for their participation and close the meeting with prayer.

Name of church.....

City and state.....

Number in group.....

A free copy of *Register Christian Opinion*, containing the names of the members of the Eighty-second Congress and the list of Standing Committees, may be secured from the Reverend Thomas B. Keehn, 1751 N Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

Recommended:

Write to your social action national office for the **Social Action Guide-book** for previous issues of **Christian Community** pertinent to this discussion, for information about schools, institutes and conferences interesting to your group, and for other materials about social action in the church and nation.

For copies of **Social Action** (15c a single copy, 10 or more 12c each) write The Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York. Ask for following issues:

"Enduring Bases of Christian Action"—John C. Bennett

"Christian Social Action"—Hugh Vernon White

"A New Kind of Churchmanship"—Liston Pope

"A Theology for Social Action"—Paul Ramsey.

For a small book worth reading in preparation for the meeting we recommend "Christian Ethics and Social Policy," by John C. Bennett. (Scribners, 1946, \$2.00)

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY Takes a Poll

In an effort to discover how we can more effectively serve the churches to which we are responsible, *Christian Community* asked 25 Congregationalists and the same number of Evangelical and Reformed persons—pastors, laymen, and social action committee chairmen—to check the topics they wish to see treated and the points at which they wish us to place greater emphasis. Eleven CC's and 9 E&R's replied. Their answers are as follows:

Which of the following topics would you prefer?

	CC E&R			CC E&R	
Civil Liberties	5	3	Race Relations, Civil Rights....	4	2
International	6	5	Industrial	—	—
Agricultural	1	3	Legislative	4	5
Housing	3	..	Public Health Insurance	1	3
Education	2	2	Social Welfare	2	3
Labor	1	3	Mobilization	1	1
Civilian Defense	3	2	Church and State	5	4
Interdenominational			Community Services	3	3
Social Action	4	4	Christian Basis for		
How Organize Social Action..	3	4	Social Action	5	2
Mass Communication	4	2	Government	4	3

Where do you want "Christian Community" to put more emphasis?

News of National			Suggestions for Action	5	6
Social Action	4	4	Reading Lists	3	1
News of What Other			Topics for Study, Discussion..	7	3
Churches are Doing	5	6	Book Reviews	2

Other topics or features suggested by replies:

More effort to stimulate lay groups

Carry a torch for a better world

Universal Military Service and Draft of 18-year-olds

"Get out of Korea and stay out of Asia"

The scramble for profits

Important bills before Congress

A better public health program

Brief news items and editorials that can be used in church bulletins

The editor and the staff will take these preferences and suggestions into account in planning the coming issues of the paper. Needless to say, we welcome the comment and suggestions of every reader. And—note—one of the top interests checked is news of what other (local) churches are doing. Will everybody who reads this far please help us meet the demand, by letting us know what your church is doing!

School Teachers Discuss Vocation

Approximately forty men and women, most of them public school teachers, met at Holy Ghost Evangelical and Reformed Church, St. Louis, on November 19th, at the invitation of the Committee on Christian Social Action of the Missouri Valley Synod, to discuss: "What is the Distinctive Role of the Christian Teacher in the Public School?"

Discussion was begun by a panel consisting of Dr. E. E. Seubert of Washington University, Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Broussard, Mr. Carl Bade, Mr. Wade Norman, and Miss Margaret Riesinger. That Christian public school teachers have a distinctive role to play was generally agreed, but there was considerable diversity of opinion as to *how* to be effective in that role.

Among the considerations suggested by the panel and the members of the conference were: the responsibility of the teacher to communicate a code of ethics; respect for the convictions of Jewish and Roman Catholic pupils; pros and cons of using biblical and religious literature; the "indirect" teaching of religion; and the significance of personal Christian faith.

There was general agreement that such meetings were profitable.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PASTORS

Courses at the Summer School of Alcohol Studies at Yale University, July 7 to August 3, will again be open to a limited number of qualified pastors recommended by their denominational social action agencies through the Department of Pastoral Services of the National Council of Churches. Total cost, \$250, with scholarships of \$100 and \$225 available. Applications, to be secured from your own social action office, must be filed before May 1.

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The University of Chicago, in cooperation with the Department of Church and Economic Life of the National Council of Churches, will again offer its special course on the Church and Economic Life this summer. For information, write to the Reverend Cameron P. Hall, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York, or to your

own social action executive.

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The Commission on Christian Social Action and the Board of National Missions of the Evangelical and Reformed Church will hold the Fourth Workshop on the City Church at St. Luke's Church, Baltimore, Maryland, May 14 to 18. For information and program write to Dr. Ralph S. Weiler, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Pennsylvania.

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The Presbyterian Institute of Industrial Relations will run for two more terms this spring—from March 26 to April 13, and from April 23 to May 11 respectively. Information should be secured from Labor Temple, 242 East 14th Street, New York 3, New York.



Speaking of Books

Living Joyously, by Kirby Page. (Rinehart, 1950, \$1.50).

This anthology for daily devotional reading covers the cycle of 365 days. Extensive quotations from more than 500 well-known religious leaders and church fellowships give the book a contemporary tone. The topics are well-chosen. Each page begins with a scripture reference, a comment and concludes with a prayer. It is well-designed to deepen the motivation for daily Christian living in this age of crisis.

American Foundation of Religious Liberty, by D. E. Lindstrom. (The Gerrard Press, \$2.00).

The Rauschenbusch lectures for 1950 by the professor of Rural Sociology from the University of Illinois show the kindred roots of religion, liberty and rural living. Religion is deep and meaningful to rural people except when the secularism of material, urban civilization undermines their idealism. "Farmers are in position, by their very dependence upon natural forces, however, to see and appreciate the meaning and significance of some of the most basic of the principles which Jesus gave, especially those which he spoke in parable form." Here is an appreciative study of rural religion from the viewpoint of a liberal layman sociologist. —R. G.

Ordeal By Slander, by Owen Lattimore. (Little, Brown, 1950, \$2.75). (Bantam 25c).

This is a book to make one angry—angry that a McCarthy, hiding behind

his senatorial immunity, can continue to make sinister, dirty charges against men of integrity and in the guise of exposing subversives increase the confusion which plays into the hands of the enemies of democracy. But it is also a book to make one proud—proud that there are Americans like Professor Lattimore to fight back without losing their perspective or their sense of public trust. It should be read and its warning heeded.

The Christian Conscience and Weapons of Mass Destruction, Report of a Special Commission, appointed by the Federal Council of Churches, published by the Department of International Justice and Goodwill. (10 cents). The commission headed by Bishop Angus Dun has prepared an able analysis of a well-nigh inscrutable problem. Its agonized Christian reasoning should be pondered carefully, and its contributions to a positive policy for peace widely studied and supported.

Korea: Second Failure in Asia, by C. Clyde Mitchell. (Public Affairs Institute. 50 cents).

This is a most helpful tracing of some of the intricacies of the Korean situation from VJ Day to June 25, 1950 on the part of one who served as Land Administrator for the American Military government. The conclusions which are drawn, while pleasing to neither the admirers of the Syngman Rhee regime nor the apologists for the Northern aggression, are most instructive.

—H. F. K.

Shirley Greene Meets Rural Groups in Pennsylvania

Shirley Greene, Agricultural Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action, recently spent a week in the Evangelical and Reformed Synods of the Southeastern part of Pennsylvania in presenting some specific ways of interpreting Social Action on the congregational level in Town and Country Churches. Mr. Greene had evening meetings in each of the following Synods: Mercersburg, Lancaster, Reading, Lehigh and Philadelphia. To each meeting were invited the Social Action Committee, the Town and Country Committee and Christian Citizenship Chairmen of the Synodical and Regional Women's Guild.

In each meeting an attempt was made to present three specific projects that any

or all of these groups working together could establish in their synods. Those presented were the *Small Discussion and Action Group*, *Christian Vocational Groups* discussing what it means to be a Christian farmer in the type of farming practiced in the particular community, and the one-day institute on *The Church and the Family Farm*.

Mr. Greene has had personal experience in the establishment of groups in each category and was able to present concrete methods of getting the work going.

This program was set up by the extension program of the Theological Seminary in Lancaster, under the leadership of Alfred C. Bartholomew, Professor of Rural Church.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Additional copies may be obtained for 2 cents each. Requests from Congregational Christians should be addressed to Ray Gibbons, Director, Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York. Requests by Evangelical and Reformed, and others, as well as news items and communications, should be addressed to the Editor, Huber F. Klemme, Commission on Christian Social Action, 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio.

At Your Service

Five sessions of two weeks each for students who desire to do constructive social action is being planned for the St. Louis area by a committee including Ernie Rueter, R. C. Budlong, A. Grieg Ritchie, "Dad" Waite, and Dean Arno Haack of Washington University. This Christian Youth-in-Community project will have 25 young people, juniors in High School through college age, in each of the sessions. A married couple will direct the project. For further information write Ernie Rueter, Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Missouri.

A free sample copy of "Ethyl Is Not a Lady," 16-page illustrated presentation of the effects of drinking alcohol, is available for inspection upon request at either office. (5 cents each in quantities). The text, written by Clifford Earle, has been carefully checked for accuracy. Especially useful with young people.

We recommend film-strip with "Teachers' Guide and Discussion Manual" entitled, *Two-thirds of Mankind*, produced by the Office of Education Activities of the New York Times. These 52 pictures with accompanying text visualize the message of November *Social Action* on "American Leadership in a Revolutionary World," by Herman F. Reissig. Copies of the film-strip and guide may be obtained from the New York Times, New York, New York for \$2.00.

The 1951 issue of *Christian Citizenship News*, published by the Women's Guild of the Evangelical and Reformed Church is now available from the Guild office, 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio, at 5 cents for single copies or 3 cents each in quantities of 25 or more. This contains a "rundown" on current social issues of concern to the churches, ranging from alcohol to genocide, and from child labor to universal military training.